

PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

(11)Publication number : 07-256972

(43)Date of publication of application : 09.10.1995

(51)Int.Cl.

B41J 21/00

B41J 2/52

G06F 3/12

(21)Application number : 06-079431

(71)Applicant : NIKON CORP

(22)Date of filing : 24.03.1994

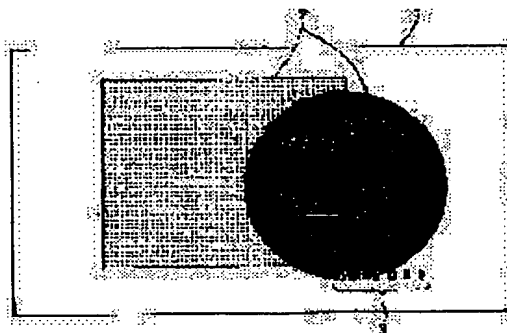
(72)Inventor : YORITA NAOAKI

(54) PRINTER

(57)Abstract:

PURPOSE: To enable printing output of such a synthetic picture image as to be able to discriminate easily a caption character irrespective of density or a color tone of a background picture, in a printer outputting a synthetic picture image of the background picture and caption character.

CONSTITUTION: A printer forms synthetic printing data based on data of the first picture image 2 and data of the second picture image 3 and outputs a synthetic picture image by the synthetic printing data. Both the printing data are compared with each other at a position where the first picture image and second picture image are piled upon each other and in the case where a difference in picture density is within a preset density range, a picture synthesizing processing part which allows at least either one out of density of a sphere of the first picture image 2 upon which the second picture image 3 is piled and the density of the second picture image 3 to change is provided.



LEGAL STATUS

[Date of request for examination]

[Date of sending the examiner's decision of rejection]

[Kind of final disposal of application other than the examiner's decision of rejection or application converted registration]

[Date of final disposal for application]

[Patent number]

[Date of registration]

[Number of appeal against examiner's decision of rejection]

[Date of requesting appeal against examiner's decision of rejection]

[Date of extinction of right]

5 [What is Claimed is:]

[Claim 1] A printer generating a composite printing data based on a first print data corresponding to a first picture image and a second print data corresponding to a second picture image, and printing and outputting a picture image composited based on said composite printing data, the printer being characterized in comprising an image composite processing part in which the first and second print data corresponding to the position in which said first picture image and second picture image overlap each other are compared and if the difference between the image density shown by the first print data and that shown by the second print data is within a predetermined range, at least one of the density of the first picture image and the density of the second picture image is changed in the overlapping area of said first picture image and said second picture image.

[Claim 2] A printer generating a composite printing data based on a first print data corresponding to a first picture image and a second print data corresponding to a second picture image, and printing and outputting a picture image

composited based on said composite printing data, the printer being characterized in comprising an image composite processing part in which the first and second print data corresponding to the position in which said first picture

5 image and second picture image overlap each other are compared and if the difference between the image color shown by the first print data and that shown by the second print data is within a predetermined range, at least one of the color of the first picture image and the color of the second picture image is changed in the overlapping area of said first picture image and said second picture image.

[Claim 3] The printer as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the data of said first picture image in the overlapping area of said first and second picture images is deleted, and the data of said second picture image is inserted into the part where the data of said first picture image is deleted.

[Claim 4] The printer as claimed in any one of claim 1 to claim 3, wherein said second picture image is constituted with characters, mark or the combination thereof.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

25 [Field of the Invention]

The present invention relates to printers, and especially relates to, in a printer for compositing a background image with a character information image, such as caption characters, to print and output, the art for making the character information image easy to discriminate by adjusting the density or color of the background image and the character information image.

(Prior Arts)

For example, to make a printed matter for explaining a product, one print image is required to be outputted and formed by compositing a photographic image of the product, which is prepared as the background in advance, with a character image for explaining the product, such as a caption, character, mark or the like. Fig. 10 shows an example as described above conceptually, and shows a picture image printed by a printer. In this figure, a background image 12 and a character image 13 are present in a print area 11. The background image 12 is a background picture image such as a photograph, and the character image 13 is an character picture image, such as a caption, character, mark or the like.

As one of the methods for compositing two images, that is, the background image and the character image to print and output by a printer, the method is present which takes the print data of the background image together with the print

data of the character image into the printer and composites these data in the printer to print as one print data. With this method, a print in which characters are composited with an image such as a product is able to be formed.

As a conventional method for compositing the print data of the background image with the print data of the character image, the method is present which directly applies the background image data and character image data so as to utilize as the print data. In this case, the print image printed and outputted is the one in which the character image is directly superimposed on the background image.

(Subjects To Be Solved By the Invention)

In the conventional printer as described above, the character image data is directly applied on the background image data, and the character image is just superimposed on the background image. Accordingly, the superimposed character image may be very difficult to be distinguished or cannot be distinguished at all, depending on the density, color or design of the background image.

For example, in the aforementioned picture image shown in Fig. 10, the background image 12 has a high density image part like black, and the character image 13 is also an picture image of high density like black. Accordingly, in the area in which the character image 13 is superimposed on the high

density part of the background image 12, it is difficult to distinguish the character image 13 from the background image 12.

In the image composite method directly superimposing the character image on the background image, the image printed and outputted after composition may become an image in which either one of the background image and the character image having greater density has priority. Accordingly, for example, in the case of monochrome printing, if the density of the background is greater, the superimposed character image cannot be distinguished. In the case of color printing, if the tone of the background is similar to that of the character image, the boundary between the background image and the character image becomes unclear, and thus recognition of the character image may become difficult.

To prevent the inconvenience caused by superimposing the character image on the background image as described above, the method is proposed in which the character image is arranged in the area having no background image, or arranged in the area of the background image having different density or tone from that of the character image. However, by selecting the position having different density or tone from that of the character image as well as low image density in the background image, as the position to place the character image, such inconvenience occurs wherein degree of freedom in

design is limited.

The method is also present for making the character image stand out by deleting the print data of the background image in the peripheral area of the character image, that is, by reversing the background image around the character image, so as to make the character image easy to distinguish. However, if a part of the background image is reversed to white, for example, a part of a product image in the background image may be lost, and thus such inconvenience occurs wherein the information about the product becomes incomplete.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is, in the printer compositing the background image with the character image and the like to output, to provide a composition method which is able to discriminate the composited characters and the like easily without fail, no matter what density, color, design the background has.

Another object of the present invention is, in the printer compositing the background image with the character image and the like to output, to provide a composition method which is able to composite the background image with the character image with limiting the lack of the background image information to a minimum.

Still another object of the present invention is, in the printer compositing the background image with the character image and the like to output, to provide a composition method

which is able to reduce the restriction of the degree of freedom in design about the position in which the character image is composited with the background image.

5 (Method for Solving the Subjects)

For solving the aforementioned problems, the printer of the present invention is a printer generating a composite printing data based on a first print data corresponding to a first picture image and a second print data corresponding to a second picture image, and printing and outputting a picture image composited based on the composite printing data, the printer being characterized in comprising an image composite processing part in which the first and second print data corresponding to the position in which the first picture image and second picture image overlap each other are compared and if the difference between the image density or color shown by the first print data and that shown by the second print data is within a predetermined range, at least one of the density or color of the first picture image and the density or color of the second picture image is changed in the overlapping area of the first picture image and the second picture image.

The data of the first picture image in the overlapping area of the first and second picture images may be deleted, and the data of the second picture image may be inserted into the part where the data of the first picture image is deleted.

The second picture image is constituted with, for example, characters, a mark or the combination thereof.

[Action]

5 With such an arrangement, the image composite processing part provided in the printer generates a composite print data from the print data of the first picture image, such as a photograph, and the print data of the second picture image, such as characters or a mark, and a composite picture image, 10 in which, for example, a caption character image is composited with a background image, is printed and outputted based on the composite print data. The image composite processing part compares the density or tone of the first and second picture images in the overlapping area of the first and second picture 15 images, for example, by a print dot unit, and, if the difference therebetween is within the range set in advance, changes at least one of the density or tone of the first picture image and that of the second picture image in the overlapping area of the first picture image and the second 20 picture image.

Namely, when the density or tone in the overlapping area of the first picture image and the second picture image is similar to the density or tone of the second picture image, at least one of the density or tone of the first and second 25 picture images is changed, thereby such a picture image is

able to be printed and outputted wherein the density or tone
in the second picture image area is different from that of the
first picture image. Accordingly, the picture image in which
the caption characters are composited is able to be printed
and outputted in the state of being easily discriminated
irrespective of the density or tone of the background image.
By making the density or tone changing area of the first
picture image not only the overlapping area of the first and
second picture images but also the area including the
periphery of the second picture image, the second picture
image is made to be easily discriminated without changing the
density or tone of the second picture image. Accordingly, for
example, even if the background image changes with a fine
pattern, the composition is performed in the state of easy
discrimination without changing the density or tone of the
caption characters or the like in the fine pattern. Further,
the first picture image around the second picture image is
changed only its density or tone, and is never reversed. Thus,
lack of the information of the first picture image, such as a
photograph, is able to be limited to a minimum.

By deleting the data of the first picture image in the
overlapping area of the first and second picture images and
inserting the data of the second picture image instead thereof,
the data of the first picture image is able to be replaced
with the data of the second picture image. Thus, for example,

in the case of compositing a black background image with white
caption characters, the influence of the background image is
removed with a simple method, to make the caption characters
easy to discriminate.

[Preferred Embodiments of the Invention]

Embodiments of the present invention are described below
referring to the drawings. Firstly, described is a printer for
performing single color printing relating to a first
embodiment of the present invention. Fig. 1 is a picture image
printed and outputted by the printer of the present invention,
in which a background image 2, such as a photograph, is
composited with caption characters 3 in the print area of a
recording paper. A part of the caption characters 3 and the
high density part of the background image 2 are overlapped.
The caption characters 3 are originally designated to be
printed and displayed as a black line drawing. However, in the
overlapping part with the background 2, the caption characters
are printed in reverse white to the background image 2 with
the reversed density.

The image data for printing and outputting the picture
image shown in Fig. 1 is dealt with as the print data of print
dot defined in Fig. 4. The print dot is a unit pixel
constituting a picture image. In Fig. 4, a picture image 8 is
shown in a print area 7, and the print area 7 is constituted

with 1024 dots arranged in the direction perpendicular to the print direction A and 1280 lines arranged in the print direction A with the 1024 dots as one line. The position of the print dot constituting the picture image 8 is defined with the line number and dot number in the print area 7. The dot number and line number constituting the print area 7 are different depending on the size of the print area 7 and the pixel density of the picture image 8.

In the same way as the picture image 8 in Fig. 4, the print dot of the caption characters 3 in the picture image in Fig. 1 is defined with the line number and dot number of the print area 7. The print data about the caption characters is inputted separately from the print data of the background image, and is treated as another data. However, the position of the print dot constituting each picture image is treated with the common line number and dot number. The position capable of displaying the caption characters in the print area 7 is decided with the dot number and line number in the print area 7 in advance. For example, in the printer set to be able to enter 20 caption characters, the area capable of displaying 20 caption characters is set with the line number and dot number in the predetermined position within the print area 7.

Fig. 5 shows a caption character drawing part 10 in the caption character display area 9 as a print dot data. In this example, the caption character display area 9 is defined as

the print dots in the area from 700th line to 715th line and from 1000th dot to 1015th dot in the print area 7 (Fig. 4). The caption character display area 9 may be decided in advance as the specification of the printer, or may be set by a user optionally.

The procedure of the image process for outputting the picture image, which is constituted with the print dot as described above and in which the density of the caption characters 3 is reversed as shown in Fig. 1, is described in detail referring to Fig. 6. Fig. 6 is a flowchart showing the process for outputting the print data for one line of the composite image generated by compositing the background image with the caption image.

When the image data to be the background and the caption character data are transmitted to the printer and image composition is designated, the image print data for one line is read in step 101. For example, the case that the nth line is started to be read from the first dot, and the print dot data of the mth dot is read in step 101 is assumed for description.

When the image data for one line is read in step 101, it is discriminated whether or not the line number read in step 101 (the nth line) is the line number including the dot number of the caption character display area, in step 102. If the nth line is discriminated to be the line including the dot number

of the caption character display area, the process advances to step 103 to continue the composite process. If the nth line is not discriminated to be the line including the dot number of the caption character display area, the process advances to step 109, and the background image data for one line of the nth line is directly outputted as the print data.

In step 103, the discrimination is performed whether or not the print dot (the mth dot) in the line read in step 101 (the nth line) is the print dot in the position overlapping with the caption character drawing part. If the mth dot is in the same position as the print dot of the caption character drawing part, the process advances to step 104 to continue the process. If the mth dot does not overlap the caption character drawing part, the process advances to step 108, and the print dot of the background image is not objected to the reversing process and is outputted as the print data directly. In step 104, the density of the print dot of the background image is calculated for the print dot discriminated to overlap with the caption character drawing part.

In step 105, the discrimination is performed whether or not the density value of the print dot of the background image calculated in step 104 is larger than a threshold value of the density set in advance. The threshold value of the density set in advance decides the density of the background image for reversing the density of the caption character. Accordingly,

by adjusting the threshold value, the balance between the density of the caption character and that of the background is made appropriate, and the caption characters are displayed in the easiest state to be distinguished.

If the calculated value of the print dot density of the background is discriminated to be larger than the threshold value in step 105, the process advances to step 107 and the print dot data in the caption character drawing part corresponding to the print dot thereof is reversed to white data. If the calculated value of the print dot density of the background is smaller than the threshold value, the process advances to step 106, and the print dot data of the caption character drawing part corresponding to the print dot thereof is left as it is (black). The value of the print dot data changed in this way is transmitted to a memory (unillustrated) and stored therein.

In step 108, the discrimination is performed whether or not the caption character display area is finished in the line read in step 101 (the nth line). Namely, it is discriminated whether or not the read mth dot is the dot number in the caption character display area. If the mth dot is not discriminated to be the last dot number in the caption character display area, the flow returns to step 103 and repeats the processes to step 108 for the next print dot (the m+1th dot) in the same line (the nth line). If the mth dot is

discriminated to be the last dot number in the caption
character display area, the flow advances to step 109 and the
print data for one line is outputted to the print part of the
printer together with the print dot data which is stored in
the memory and has adjusted the density as described in step
106. Then, the flow returns to step 101 and starts reading the
print dot data of the next line (the n+1th line). This
procedure is repeated until the print area of the picture
image is finished.

10 By performing the process for each one line of the print
picture image, and changing the density of the caption
character part recognizing the picture image data by the print
dot unit in accordance with the steps as described above, the
print picture image as shown in Fig. 1, in which the density
of the caption characters is reversed in the part overlapping
with the background image, is able to be outputted.

Accordingly, the density of the caption characters is reduced
in the high density part of the background image, while the
density of the caption characters is increased in the low
density part of the background image. Thus, print and display
is performed in the state that the caption characters are
easily discriminated irrespective of the density of the
background image.

A second embodiment of the present invention performing
color printing is described. The picture image performed color

printing and outputted is similar to the picture image shown
in Fig. 1 in appearance. The point different from the first
embodiment is that the print data is resolved into the data of
three colors due to color printing of the picture image.

5 The flow of an image signal in a color printer is
described referring to Fig. 3. An image data from a computer
or the like is inputted to an image data input part 20, and is
outputted to the printing part of the printer from a print
data output part 24 via a luminance density conversion
10 processing part 21, color conversion processing part 22 and a
caption character composite processing part 23. The character
data 27 of the caption characters is inputted to the caption
character composite processing part 23. The luminance density
conversion processing part 21, color conversion processing
15 part 22, caption character composite processing part 23 and
print data output part 24 are each connected to a CPU (central
processing unit) 25, and the CPU 25 is connected to a memory
26.

In the constitution as described above, the image signal
from a computer or video is inputted to the image data input
part 20 as a video signal resolved into R (red), G (green) and
B (blue). In the luminance density conversion processing part
21, the video signal data formed of R, G and B luminous signal
for displaying on the display is converted to the data about
25 the density of each color of ink Dr, Dg and Db. For example,

the luminance of the video signal of the data value 255 is white, while the density of the data value 255 in printing corresponds to black. Namely, even in the identical color, the data value of the video data is different from that of the print data, and thus the luminance density conversion processing part 21 converts the data values. The color conversion processing part 22 adjusts the parameter about the density data of the ink of Y (yellow), M (magenta) and C (cyan) matching with the color material used in the printer. Accordingly, the picture image to be printed and outputted is able to be printed and outputted in the appropriate color without haze.

The caption character composite processing part 23 receives the print data and character data 27 of one of the colors Y, M and C from the color conversion processing part 22 to perform the image composite process, and transmits the result thereof to the print data output part to output to a printing part (unillustrated) of the printer.

The data processes in the luminance density conversion processing part 21, color conversion processing part 22, caption character composite processing part 23, and print data output part 24 are controlled by the CPU 25, and the data performed composite process is stored in the memory 26 and read out as the occasion demands.

The composite process in the printer performing color

printing in the second embodiment is described referring to the flowchart in Fig. 7. The flowchart in Fig. 7 shows the procedure for, if the background image has a tone close to the caption character color, changing the caption character data to not white but the other color set in advance so as to make the caption character easy to read. For example, in the case of compositing red caption characters with the background image, if the background image has red shade the same as the caption characters, the caption characters are made easy to read by changing the print data in the caption character part of the composite picture image to green data.

The procedure of the image composite process in color printing is basically the same as the procedure of the composite process in the first embodiment. The different point is that the print dot data of the background image overlapping with the caption characters is considered as not the density data but the tone data, and the caption characters are made stand out by changing not only the density but also the color.

In Fig. 7, if the image composition is designated, the data for one line read in step 201 (one of the data of Y, M and C from the color conversion processing part 22 shown in Fig. 3) is discriminated to be the line including the caption character display area in step 202. About the print dot discriminated to overlap with the caption character drawing part in step 203, the color of the background in the position

of the print dot is calculated in step 204. The calculation of the color of the background image is actually performed for the data of each color of Y, M and C described in Fig. 3 to finally decide the color. The calculation value of the background image color is discriminated whether or not the value is within the range of the value set in advance based on the tone of the caption characters. Namely, it is designated whether or not the tone of the background image of the read print dot resembles to the tone of the caption characters and is difficult to distinguish. Concretely, for example, the equation for obtaining the hue is formed based on the print data relating to Y, M and C, and the calculation result is compared with the threshold value set in advance based on the tone of the caption characters, so as to decide whether or not the tone of the background image is similar to that of the caption characters.

If the toner of the print dot is discriminated to be within the tone set in advance, the tone of the caption character part is changed to the tone other than the tone originally set as the caption character tone in step 207. The changed tone may be automatically set in advance as one more color when the caption character color is set at first. If the tone of the background image is out of the range of the tone set in advance, the process advances to step 206 and the color set in advance as the caption character color is directly

displayed.

After performing the process for the tone about one print dot, the discrimination is performed whether or not the caption character display area is finished in step 208 in the same way as the first embodiment. If the discrimination is that the caption character display area is finished, the process advances to step 209 to output the print data for one line, and the process for the tone of the next line is performed.

As described above, when the tone of the background image is similar to that of the composited caption characters, the tone of the caption character part is changed to a different tone from the background image to be outputted and displayed. Accordingly, it becomes possible to make the caption characters stand out so as to be distinguished easily, irrespective of the tone of the background image.

A third embodiment of the present invention is described. The present embodiment outputs, in color printing, a print picture image in which the tone of the caption characters is always the tone different from the background image. The print picture image is similar to the picture image shown in Fig. 1.

The procedure of the process of the image composite process of the present invention is described referring to Fig. 8. The point different from the second embodiment is that, in this embodiment, the caption character part is always changed

to the tone different from the background image, irrespective that the tone of the caption characters is similar to the toner of the background image. Namely, in the same way as step 201 to step 204 of Fig. 7, the image color of the print dot of the specific line in the background image corresponding to the drawing part of the caption characters is calculated in step 301 to step 304. In step 305, the image color data of the print dot is always changed to the value different from the image color data of the background image. The changed destination tone may be decided following the equation formed in advance based on the calculated hue data of the print dot of the background image. As a result, the tone of each part of the caption characters always becomes a different tone from that of the background image, and thus the caption characters are able to be made stand out and distinguished easily.

A fourth embodiment of the present invention is described. The first to third embodiments described above make the caption characters easy to distinguish by changing the print dot density or the color data of only the caption character drawing part in the print picture image. However, in the background image used actually, the density and tone may change in a fine cycle. For example, such a case is present wherein, to make the printed picture image appear gray, a fine pattern checker is drawn in a print dot unit so as to make the whole image appear gray. If the caption characters are to be

composited with such a fine pattern background image as described above, the density of the caption characters changes corresponding to the checker pattern of the background image to be reversed to a mosaic pattern. As a result, the density of the caption characters may appear gray and become difficult to be distinguished from the background image. In the same way also in color printing, even if the tone of the caption character drawing part is changed on the background image in which the tone changes with a fine pattern, discrimination of the caption characters may not be improved.

The fourth embodiment makes the discrimination of the caption characters easy, in compositing the caption characters with the background image in which the tone changes with such a fine pattern. Fig. 2 shows the picture image printed and outputted in the present embodiment and displays the image with changing the tone of the background image around the caption characters. In this figure, a background image 5 is composited with caption characters 6 in a print area 4. As obvious from the figure, the tone of the periphery of the caption characters 6 in the background image 5 overlapping with the caption characters 6 is different from the original tone of the background image 5, so as to discriminate the caption characters 6 easily. In the part in which the tone is different around of the caption characters 6, the outline of the background image 5 is able to be discriminated because the

background image 5 is not completely reversed to white.

The procedure of the image composite process of the fourth embodiment is described based on the flowchart in Fig. 9. The processes in steps 401, 402, and 404 are the same as those of the first to third embodiments. The image data for one line is discriminated whether or not the line is the one in which the caption characters are included, and is discriminated whether or not it is the print dot present in the position corresponding to the caption character drawing part. If the discrimination is that the print dot is not the one in the caption character drawing part but the one in the caption character display area 9 (Fig. 5) in steps 403 and 404, the tone data of the print dot is changed to the tone data which is other than the tone set as the caption character color in advance and other than the tone of the background image. Since the caption characters should be made easy to distinguish, the picture image in the caption character display area may be reduced its density or rewritten in completely different color. If the print dot is discriminated to be the one in the caption character drawing part in step 404, the print dot data is left as the tone data set in advance as the caption character color in step 406.

The discrimination is performed whether or not the processes of step 403 to step 406 have been finished for all print dots in the caption character display area in step 407.

If the processes have been finished for all print dots in the caption character display area, the print data for one line is outputted.

By changing the hue and density of the background image in the caption character peripheral area, the image composition is performed in the state that the caption characters stand out even on the background image changing with a fine pattern. Accordingly, the caption characters are easily discriminated, and the background image is only changed its tone and never reversed, thereby image information is able to be remained to some extent. Thus, even in the case of putting a product or the like as the background image, lack of the information about the product is able to greatly reduced.

Though, in the four embodiments described above, the composition of the character data of the caption characters is performed at the timing after the image data is converted to the print data in the color conversion part 22 in Fig. 3, it may be performed at another timing. For example, if the character data of the caption characters is composited before the color conversion is performed in the color conversation part 22, the color of the caption characters is able to be converted together with the color of the background image, and it is prevented that coloring of the caption characters unnaturally stands out in the background image.

In the four embodiments described above, the case of

compositing the background image with the caption characters which is comparatively smaller than the background image is described. However, the printer of the present invention is applicable as far as in the case of compositing a plurality of picture images and outputting the composite picture image.

[Effects of the Invention]

As described above, in printing and outputting the composite picture image in which the character image is composited with the background image, the present invention is able to print and output it as the picture image in which the character image is automatically made stand out so as to be easy to distinguish. Accordingly, even in the case of compositing the caption characters with the background to print, the operation for changing the density and tone of the caption characters in accordance with the density and tone of the background image is unnecessary, and thus print of the composite picture image becomes very easy.

In deciding the position for putting the caption characters, there is no need to select the area of the density and tone appropriate to the caption characters in the background image, and thus, degree of freedom in design of the composite picture image is never limited.

By changing the density and tone of the background image around the character image in the composite picture image,

printing and display are performed with the character image standing out, irrespective of the density of the background image and the image pattern of the tone. Since the background image in that part is only changed the density and tone and is never reversed, lack of the information of the background image is able to be limited to a minimum.

By replacing the background image data in the position overlapping with the character image to the character image data, for example, in the case of compositing white caption characters with a black background image, the picture image in which the caption characters stand out is able to be printed and outputted by means of the very simple method.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

Fig. 1 is an illustration showing a picture image printed and outputted by the printer relating to a first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is an illustration showing a picture image printed and outputted by the printer relating to another embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 3 is a block diagram schematically showing the flow of an image signal of color printing in the printer of the present invention;

Fig. 4 is an illustration showing the arrangement of the print dot of the picture image recognized by the printer of

the present invention;

Fig. 5 is an illustration showing the image data constituting the print dot of the character data of a caption character;

Fig. 6 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to the first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a second embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a third embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 9 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a fourth embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 10 is an illustration showing the picture image printed and outputted by a conventional printer.

[Description of the References]

- 1, 4, 7 and 11 Printing areas
- 2, 5, 8 and 12 Background areas
- 3, 6, and 13 Character images
- 9 Caption character drawing part
- 25 10 Caption character display area

- 20 Image data input part
- 21 Luminance density conversion processing part
- 22 Color conversion processing part
- 23 Caption character composite processing part
- 5 24 Print data output part
- 25 CPU
- 26 Memory
- 27 Character data

(51) Int. Cl. ⁶	識別記号	庁内整理番号	FI	技術分野
B 41 J	21/00	A		
G 06 F	3/12	F		
			B 41 J	3/00 A

(21) 出願番号	特開平 6-79431	(71) 出願人	000004112 株式会社ニコン
(22) 出願日	平成 6 年 (1994) 3 月 24 日	(72) 発明者	東京都千代田区丸の内 3 丁目 2 番 3 号 菅田 直島
		(74) 代理人	東京都千代田区丸の内 3 丁目 2 番 3 号 株式会社ニコン内 井理士 池内 義明

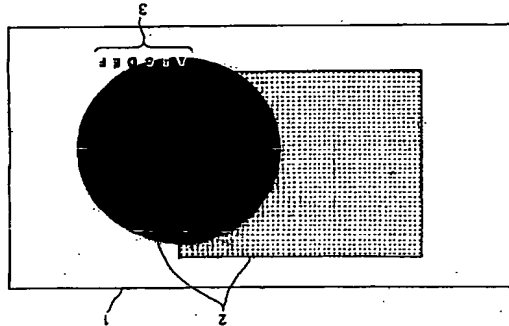
審査請求 未請求 請求項の数 4 FD (全 11 頁)

(54) 発明の名称 プリント装置

(57) 要約

【目的】 背景画像とキャプション文字の合成画像イメージを出力するプリント装置において、背景画像の濃度や色調に関係なくキャプション文字が容易に識別できるような合成画像イメージを印刷出力できるようにする。

【構成】 第 1 の画像イメージ (2) のデータと第 2 の画像イメージ (3) のデータに基づいて合成印刷データを作成し、該合成印刷データにより合成画像イメージを出力するプリント装置において、前記第 1 の画像イメージと第 2 の画像イメージとが異なる位置において印刷データを比較し、画像濃度差があらかじめ設定された濃度の範囲内にある場合に、前記第 1 の画像イメージ (2) の前記第 2 の画像イメージ (3) が重なる領域の濃度および前記第 2 の画像イメージ (3) の濃度のうちの少なくとも一方を変化させる画像合成処理部を設ける。



【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項 1】 第 1 の画像イメージに対応する第 1 の印刷データと第 2 の画像イメージに対応する第 2 の印刷データに基づいて合成印刷データを作成し、該合成印刷データにもとづき合成された画像イメージを印刷出力するプリント装置であって、

前記第 1 の画像イメージと前記第 2 の画像イメージとが互いに異なる位置に対応する両印刷データを比較し、第 1 の印刷データによって表わされる画像濃度と第 2 の印刷データによって表わされる画像濃度との差があらかじめ設定された範囲内にある場合に、前記第 1 の画像イメージと前記第 2 の画像イメージが重なる領域において第 1 の画像イメージの濃度および前記第 2 の画像イメージの濃度のうちの少なくとも一方を変化させる画像合成処理部を具備することを特徴とするプリント装置。

【請求項 2】 第 1 の画像イメージに対応する第 1 の印刷データと第 2 の画像イメージに対応する第 2 の印刷データに基づいて合成印刷データを作成し、該合成印刷データにもとづき合成された画像イメージを印刷出力するプリント装置であって、

前記第 1 の画像イメージと前記第 2 の画像イメージとが互いに異なる位置に対応する両印刷データを比較し、第 1 の印刷データによって表わされる画像の色と第 2 の印刷データによって表わされる画像の色との差があらかじめ設定された範囲内にある場合に、前記第 1 の画像イメージと前記第 2 の画像イメージが重なる領域において第 1 の画像イメージの色および前記第 2 の画像イメージの色とのうちの少なくとも一方を変化させる画像合成処理部を具備することを特徴とするプリント装置。

【請求項 3】 前記第 2 の画像イメージが重なる領域にある前記第 1 の画像イメージのデータを削除し、その前記第 1 の画像イメージのデータを削除した部分に前記第 2 の画像イメージのデータを挿入することを特徴とする請求項 1 または請求項 2 の記載のプリント装置。

【請求項 4】 前記第 2 の画像イメージが、文字、マークまたはこれらの組合せによって構成されることを特徴とする請求項 1 または請求項 3 までのいずれか 1 項に記載のプリント装置。

【発明の詳細な説明】

【0001】

【産業上の利用分野】 本発明は、プリント装置に関し、特に背景となる画像とキャプション等の文字情報画像とを合成して印刷出力するプリント装置において、背景画像や文字情報画像の濃度や色を調整することによって文字情報画像を識別し易くするための技術に関する。

【0002】

【従来の技術】 たとえば商品を示すための印刷物を作成するために、背景となるようにあらかじめ用意された商品の写真画像イメージと、その商品を示明するためのキャプション、文字、マーク等の文字画像イメージを

合成して 1 枚の印刷画像イメージを出力作成することが必要な場合がある。図 10 はそのような例を概念的に示したものであり、プリント装置によって印刷された画像イメージを表している。この図では、印刷領域 11 内に背景画像 12 および文字画像 13 がある。ここで、背景画像 12 は商品の写真などの背景画像イメージであり、文字画像 13 はキャプション、文字、マーク等の文字画像イメージである。

【0003】 このように背景画像と文字画像の 2 つの画像イメージを合成してプリント装置で印刷出力する方法の 1 つとして、背景画像の印刷データと文字画像の印刷データとを一緒にプリント装置に取り込み、それらのデータをプリント装置内で合成して 1 つの印刷データとして印刷を行う方法がある。この方法により、商品等の画像に文字等を入れた印刷物を作成することができる。

【0004】 従来、このような背景画像の印刷データと文字画像の印刷データとを合成する方法として、背景画像データと文字画像データとをそのまま加えて印刷データとして利用する方法があつた。この場合、印刷出力される画像イメージは背景画像イメージと文字画像イメージとがそのまま重なったものであつた。

【0005】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】 しかしながら、このように従来のプリント装置では、背景画像のデータに文字画像のデータをそのまま加えて上書きして文字画像に背景画像をそのまま重ねただけなので、背景となる画像の濃度や色や絵柄によっては、重ねた文字画像が全く識別できないかまたは識別が非常に困難な場合があつた。

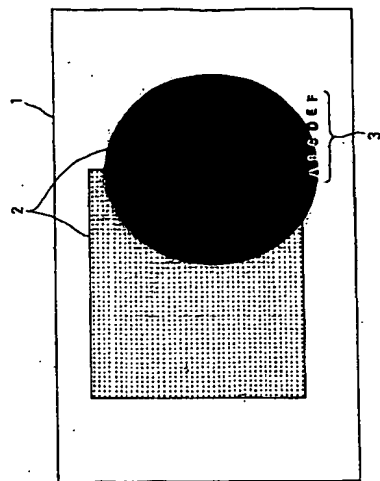
【0006】 たとえば、先に述べた図 10 に示す画像イメージでは、背景画像 12 は画像濃度の大きい黒色のような画像イメージの部分があり、文字画像 13 もまた画像濃度の大きい黒色のような画像イメージである。そのため、文字画像 13 が背景画像 12 の濃度の大きい部分と重なる領域では、文字画像 13 が背景画像 12 と識別困難になってしまつていた。

【0007】 また、文字画像をそのまま背景画像に重ねる画像の合成方法では、実際には合成後に印刷出力される画像イメージが背景画像と文字画像の濃度のうちの濃度の方が大きい場合には重ね合わされた文字画像が識別できなくなるといふ不都合があつた。またさらにカラー印刷の場合には、背景画像の色調と文字画像の色調が似ている場合には背景画像と文字画像の境界が不明瞭になって文字画像の認識が困難になることがあつた。

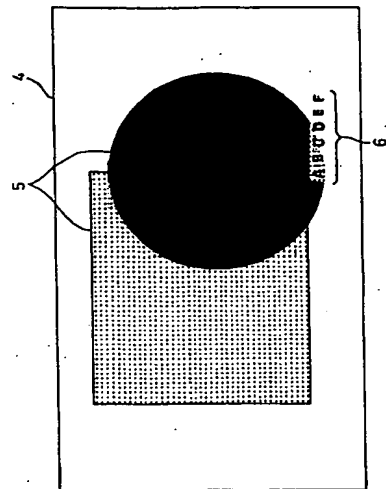
【0008】 このような背景画像と文字画像が重なることによる生じる不都合を回避するために、文字画像を背景画像のない領域に配置したり、背景画像の中でも文字画像と濃度や色調が異なる領域に配置したりする方法が

- 22 色変換処理部
23 キャプション文字合成処理部
24 プリントデータ出力部
25 CPU
26 メモリ
27 文字データ

【図1】



【図2】



色調を背景画像の濃度や色調によって変えるための操作が必要になるので、合成画像イメージの印刷が極めて容易になる。

【0053】また、キャプション文字を入れる位置を決める際に、背景画像のなかのキャプション文字に通じた濃度や色調の領域を遡る必要がないので、合成画像イメージのデザイン上の自由度を制約されることがない。

【0054】また、合成画像イメージの文字画像のまわりの背景画像の濃度や色調を変化させることにより、背景画像の濃度や色調の画像パターンに關係なく、常に文字画像を際立たせて印刷表示することができる。さらに、その部分の背景画像は濃度や色調が変化する場合、白抜きにはならないので、背景画像の情報の欠落を最低限に抑えることができる。

【0055】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0056】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0057】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0058】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0059】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0060】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0061】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0062】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0063】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0064】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0065】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0066】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0067】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0068】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

【0069】また、文字画像が置かれる位置にある背景画像のデータを文字画像のデータと置き換えることにより、印刷出力された画像イメージを示す説明図である。

3, 404でその印刷ドットが、キャプション文字領域部分の印刷ドットではないが、キャプション文字表示領域9(図5)の印刷ドットであると判断された場合は、ステップ405で、その印刷ドットの色調のデータを、あらかじめキャプション文字色として設定された色調以外の色調でかつ背景画像の色調以外の色調のデータに変更する。このキャプション文字表示領域の画像イメージは、キャプション文字を識別しやすくできればよいので、濃度を小さくしたりあるいは全く別の色に置き換えてもよい。ステップ404で印刷ドットがキャプション文字領域部分の印刷ドットであると判断された場合は、ステップ406でその印刷ドットのデータをキャプション文字色としてあらかじめ設定された色調のデータのま

まにしておく。

【0048】次にステップ407で、キャプション文字表示領域内の全ての印刷ドットについてステップ403からステップ406までの処理が終わったかどうかを判断し、キャプション文字表示領域内の全ての印刷ドットについて終了した場合には、ステップ408で1ライン分のプリントデータ出力を行う。

【0049】このように、キャプション文字周辺領域の背景画像の色調や濃度を変化させることによって、細かいパターンで変化する背景画像であってもキャプション文字を際立たせた状態で画像合成することができ、したがって、キャプション文字を識別しやすくなる。また、かつ背景画像の色調が変化するだけで白抜きにせず画像情報がある程度残すことができるので、背景画像として商品などを入れる場合でも商品に関する情報の欠落を極めて低く抑えることができる。

【0050】なお、以上説明した4つの実施例では、キャプション文字のデータを合成するタイミングとして、図3の色変換部22で画像データをプリントデータに変換した後に実行しているが、他のタイミングでもよい。たとえば、色変換部22で色変換を行う前にキャプション文字のデータを合成すれば、キャプション文字の色を背景画像と共に色変換することができ、キャプション文字の色が背景画像から不自然に際立つことを防ぐことができる。

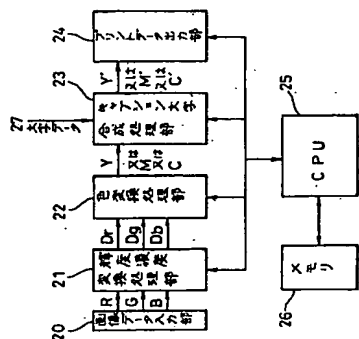
【0051】さらに、以上説明した4つの実施例では、背景画像にその背景画像よりも比較的小さいキャプション文字を合成する場合について説明したが、本発明のプリント装置は、複数の画像イメージを合成して合成画像イメージを出力する場合であれば適用可能である。

【0052】

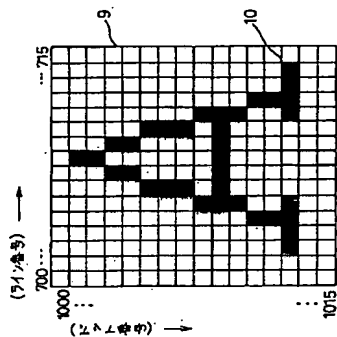
【発明の効果】以上のように、本発明によれば、背景画像に文字画像を合成した合成画像イメージを印刷出力する場合に、自動的に文字画像を背景画像から際立たせて識別しやすいために画像イメージとして印刷出力することができ、したがって、背景画像にキャプション文字を合成して印刷する場合でも、キャプション文字の濃度や

- 1, 4, 7, 11 印刷領域
2, 5, 8, 12 背景領域
3, 6, 13 文字画像
9 キャプション文字領域部分
10 キャプション文字表示領域
20 画像データ入力部
21 濃度濃度変換処理部

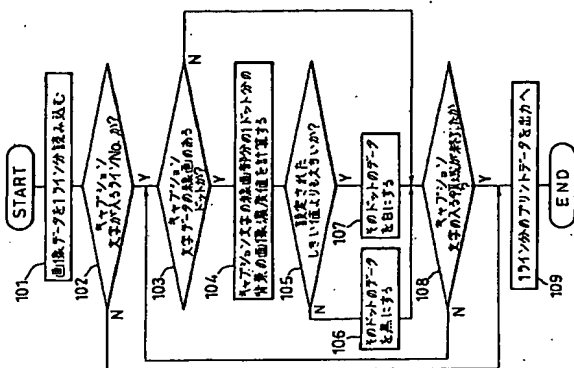
【図 3】



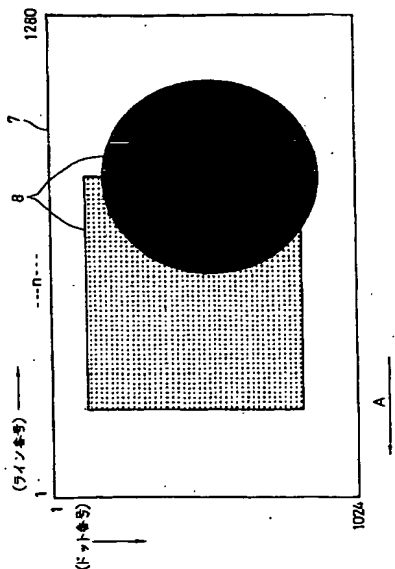
【図 5】



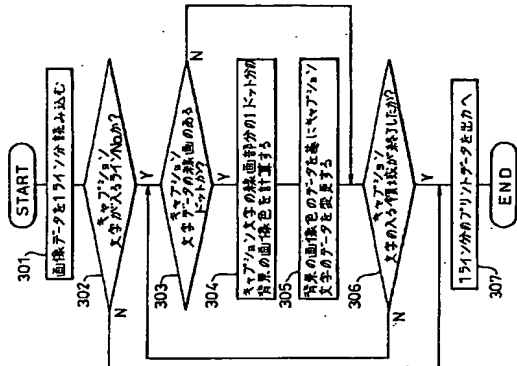
【図 6】



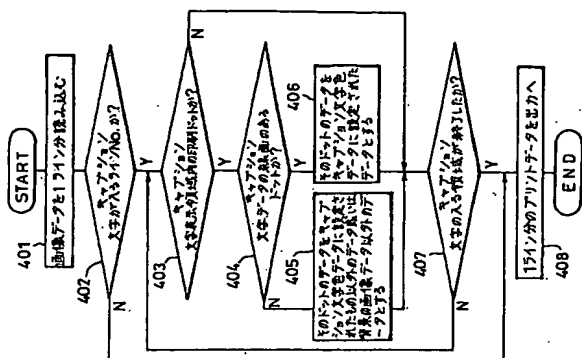
【図 4】



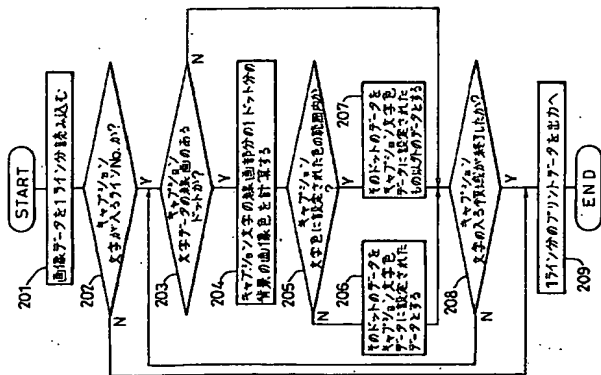
【図 8】



【図 9】



【図7】



【図10】

